

**Wauchula Police Department
Policy and Procedures
SOP 1-17a Retirement Firearms**

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Approved by Chief of Police:	Ronald J. Curtis, Jr.

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Policy: Pursuant to section 112.193, Florida Statutes, the City of Wauchula Police Department may present to each law enforcement officer who retires under the City's retirement system, including medical disability retirement, or who is eligible to retire under such system but, instead, resigns from the Wauchula Police Department to accept an elected public office, in addition to one complete uniform including the badge worn by that officer, and an identification card clearly marked "RETIRED," the officer's service handgun, if one was issued as part of the officer's equipment.

Additionally, the Chief of Police may authorize the transfer of a duty firearm that has been declared and approved as surplus property by the City Commission, to a Wauchula Police Officer who has provided a minimum of 20-years of honorable service to the City of Wauchula and the Police Department, has separated from employment as a Wauchula Police Officer, and who is eligible, but who has not retired under the City's retirement system, in accordance with applicable laws governing public property. The transfer of firearms must be authorized in writing by the Chief of Police and approved in writing by the City Manager after completion of a criminal history check on the subject officer.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the lawful disposition of department-issued firearms to recognize retiring officers under section 112.193, Florida Statutes, and for the transfer of surplus department-issued firearms for value to qualifying officers who retire from active duty with the Wauchula Police Department after a minimum of 20 years of service and are eligible to retire under the City's retirement system, but who have not retired under, and are not receiving benefits from, the City's retirement system.

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1. DEFINITIONS

1. **Retiring Officer** - A current or former full-time or part-time sworn law enforcement officer of the City of Wauchula Police Department who (1) retires under the City's retirement system, including medical disability retirement, (2) who is eligible to retire under such system but, instead, resigns from the Wauchula Police Department to accept an elected public office, or (3) who has separated from employment in good standing after completing a minimum of twenty (20) years of honorable service and is eligible, but has not retired under, and is not receiving benefits from, the City's retirement system. As to officers identified in section (3) of this paragraph, while continuous service is preferred, it is not required, provided there has been no break in service for five (5) or more consecutive years.
2. **Surplus Firearm** - Any department-issued firearm that has been formally determined to be no longer required for official use by the City of Wauchula Police Department and has been designated as surplus property in accordance with Chapter 274, Florida Statutes, and applicable City policies and procedures governing the disposition of municipal assets.
3. **Identification/Credentials** - A retiree identification card and, where appropriate, a retiree badge both of which prominently bear the word "Retired" thereon.

2. PROCEDURES

There is well-established precedent within the State of Florida for law enforcement agencies to transfer a retiring officer's duty weapon as a gesture of recognition for honorable service. Guidance from the Florida Police Chiefs Association indicates that such transfers are permissible, though not mandatory, and are widely practiced across the state, with a significant majority of agencies participating in this tradition.

The Wauchula Police Department will adhere to the following procedures and requirements for transferring firearms to retiring officers under this policy:

1. A law enforcement officer who retires under the City's retirement system, including medical disability retirement, or who is eligible to retire under such system but, instead, resigns from the Wauchula Police Department to accept an elected public office, will be provided, in addition to one complete uniform including the badge worn by that officer, and an identification card clearly marked "RETIRED," the officer's service handgun, as provided by section 112.193, Florida Statutes.

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2. A Wauchula Police Officer who has provided a minimum of 20-years of honorable service to the City of Wauchula and the Police Department, has separated from employment as a Wauchula Police Officer, and who is eligible, but who has not retired under and is not receiving benefits from the City's retirement system, may be eligible to receive, in exchange for value, a department-issued firearm that has been declared and approved by the City Commission as surplus property as follows:
 - a. The Chief of Police shall follow the procedures set forth in SOP 1-17 for declaring firearms surplus property.
 - b. Once the City Commission has approved the department-issued firearm as surplus, it may be transferred to the retiring officer pursuant to this Paragraph for value, payable to the City of Wauchula. Payment shall be made on behalf of the retiring officer by the Chief of Police, with personal funds, NOT public money, and the transaction shall be properly documented in accordance with applicable City policies and procedures.
3. Prior to the transfer of any department-issued firearm under this policy, the retiring officer must be legally eligible to possess and receive a firearm under all applicable federal and state laws. This includes compliance with provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 922, which prohibits firearm possession by certain individuals, such as those convicted of felony offenses, persons subject to qualifying domestic violence injunctions, or individuals adjudicated as mentally defective. Additionally, eligibility must be consistent with applicable Florida statutes, including Florida Statute 790.23, which restricts firearm possession by convicted felons within the state. The department shall take reasonable steps to verify that the retiring officer is not subject to any disqualifying conditions at the time of transfer, thereby ensuring that the disposition of the firearm is lawful and in full compliance with governing legal standards. All criminal history checks and transfers must be documented in writing, and approved by appropriate authority.

3. DOCUMENTATION

The Chief of Police shall prepare and maintain all necessary documentation associated with the transfer of the firearm in question as set forth in SOP 1-17. With respect to transfers of firearms pursuant to section 112.193, Florida Statutes, the Chief needs only prepare and maintain (1) the letter confirming the criminal history check (and associated criminal history record); and (2) the Firearms Transfer Receipt and Acknowledgment. Upon completion, these documents shall be retained on file with the police department in the retiring officer's personnel file, in accordance with applicable Florida public records retention requirements. This documentation shall be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with all legal,

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administrative, and policy provisions governing the disposition of municipal property, including but not limited to surplus designation, authorization for transfer, and proof of lawful eligibility.

4. IDENTIFICATION

The department shall provide retiring officers who meet the criteria set forth in this policy with official retiree credentials, including a retiree identification card and, where appropriate, a retiree badge. These credentials serve to formally recognize the officer's honorable service and continued affiliation with the department, while also providing a means of identification consistent with widely accepted law enforcement practices.

Issuance of retiree credentials shall be subject to departmental approval and shall not confer any law enforcement authority, powers of arrest, or employment status. All retiree credentials remain the property of the department and may be subject to recall or revocation in accordance with applicable laws, policies, or if the individual becomes ineligible to possess such credentials.



Ronald J. Curtis, Jr.
Chief of Police

April 10, 2026

Date